



CyberBullying

Cyberbullying is defined as the use of technology to support deliberate, hostile and hurtful behaviour towards an individual or group of individuals.

Just like other forms of bullying, cyberbullying is about power and control. Those who bully others are trying to establish dominance over people they perceive to be weaker than them. While technology can be used as a positive communication tool it can also be used to hurt others.

The convenience of modern technology enables people who are bullying to hide behind anonymity.

There are several ways that people bully others online.

They do it by:

- Sending e-mails or instant messages containing insults or threats directly to a person.
- Spreading hateful comments about a person through e-mail, instant messaging or postings on websites and blogs.

- Stealing passwords and sending out threatening e-mails or instant messages using an assumed identity.
- Building websites, often with password protection, to target specific people.

The law

Some forms of online bullying are considered criminal acts. Under the Criminal Code of Canada it is a crime to:

- Communicate repeatedly with someone if the communication causes them to fear for their own safety or the safety of others.
- Write something that is designed to insult a person or likely to injure a person's reputation by exposing them to hatred, contempt or ridicule.

A person may also be violating the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, if he or she spreads hate or discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or disability.

Cases of bullying are now going before the courts. It's likely that cases involving cyberbullying will soon follow.

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Need to talk to someone about bullying?
Call 1-888-456-2323 (24 hours, toll-free in Alberta).

b-free.ca

Children and Youth Services and Education are proud to lead Alberta's Cross-Ministry Prevention of Bullying Strategy.

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of Alberta**



The role of Internet service providers and cell phone service providers

Internet service providers (ISPs) are the companies that provide Internet access to consumers. Most ISPs have Acceptable Use Policies that clearly define privileges and guidelines for those using their services, and the actions that can be taken if those guidelines are violated.

ISPs and cell phone service providers can respond to reports of cyberbullying over their networks, or help clients identify the appropriate service provider to contact.

Parents should tell their children not to delete messages so that they can be saved and referred to the appropriate people for resolution.

Most cyberbullying occurs when adults aren't around.

Below are some tips to pass along to the young person in your life:

- Guard your contact information. Don't give people you don't know your cell phone number, instant messaging name or e-mail address.
- If you're being harassed online, take the following actions immediately:
 - Tell an adult you trust.
 - Leave the area or stop the activity (e.g., chat room, instant messaging).

- Block the sender's messages. Never reply to harassing messages!
- Save any harassing messages and forward them to your Internet Service Provider.
- If the bullying involves threats, tell the police.
- Take a stand. Speak up when you see someone harassing another person online. Most youth respond better to their peers and will listen to them more than they would an adult.

For more information on cyberbullying visit:

www.b-free.ca

- Website developed for youth, by youth, that provides practical advice on how to Stand Up and Stop Bullying.

www.bullyfreealberta.ca

- Website for adults that features information about bullying prevention and intervention, as well as a number of free resources.

www.bewebaware.ca

- Internet safety site for youth developed by the Media Awareness Network.

www.cyberbullying.org

- Includes information and support for victims of cyberbullying.

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